

Analysis of Factors Responsible for Poor Patronage of Public Higher Institutions in Nigeria by Competent Foreign Academics

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Abstract: Academic staff of higher institutions are mobile labour force. The nature of academic job permits them to move from one country to another in search of more satisfactory work experience. Academics migrate from country to country where they carry out teaching, research and community services. Presently, in Nigerian higher institutions especially universities there are few employed foreign academics or lecturers. This paper examines the major factors responsible for poor patronage of competent foreign academics in Nigerian higher institutions. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used in the paper. The literatures were sourced both online and from print materials. It was established that quota system policies, inadequate funding, poor salaries, insecurity, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of internationalization policy on higher Education in Nigeria, poor working conditions, unstable academic calendar, poor administration and management model are the factors responsible for the presence of few employed foreign academics in Nigerian higher institutions. The paper recommends that the federal and state government should remove the higher institutions from the federal character employment policy, increase the funding of higher education, increase the salaries of academic staff, provide adequate security and adequate modern infrastructural facilities. Also, the government should come up with internationalization policy on higher education, improve on the working conditions of academic staff and implement all agreement reached with different union groups in the various higher institutions to avoid strike actions.

Keywords: Academic, Foreign, Higher, Institutions, Public, University.

Introduction

The first higher institution in Nigeria was established in Lagos in 1932 (Adeyemo, 2000). The establishment of this higher institution began the expansion of higher education in Nigeria and in Africa to the extent that the Nigerian higher institutions became the largest in the entire Africa (Uzor, 2020). The Nigerian higher institutions especially the universities were home to many foreign lecturers from European countries, Asia, America and other African countries in the early years of their establishment. The National President of Academic Staff Union of Universities, Prof. Osodeke, said that in the 80s when he was a student, he attended a state university in Nigeria; and in the faculty where he was, there were six lecturers from different countries in this world; Europe, Africa and Asia (Umeh, 2021). He further stated that today, they would not come because the welfare and salary are not competitive. Goshwe (2022) also observed that there was a time in the 80s when the head of the department where he graduated from was a Ghanaian and some staff of the university were from different continents of the world. The staff mix in all the departments of the university cut across many states of the federation. As

at then, an Igbo man was the VC of FUT Makurdi, an Edo man was the VC of Unijos, Prof Shehu from Borno was the VC of UNN, Prof. Bekki from Kano was the VC of Uniben and Prof. Gomwalk was the VC of FUT Owerri (Goshwe, 2022). They contested and won on merit without political interference. Then, Nigerian universities were among the top universities in the world.

The privilege the Nigerian higher institutions had to have accommodated foreign students and lecturers to school and work here in Nigeria was dashed when the government started interfering in the management and internal administration of the higher institutions. This led to poor funding of the higher institutions and unhealthy policies and practices. This development started reducing the number of foreign students coming to school in Nigeria and foreign academics working in Nigeria. Recently, Ogunode, Yiolokun, & Akeredolu, (2019) submitted that the proportions of foreign students as well as foreign staff in Nigerian Universities are low. It was observed that inability of Nigerian higher institutions especially the universities to attract students and lecturers from around the world is caused by failure of government to develop the educational institutions especially the universities (Umeh, (2021). Based on this submission, it is important to examine the various factors responsible for poor patronage of public higher institutions in Nigeria by competent foreign academics.

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg (1959) developed motivational theory which involves two factors (Ozsoy, 2019). Herzberg terms these factors satisfiers or motivators and hygiene factor or dissatisfiers. The theory states that employees' motivation is achieved with challenging enjoyable work where achievement, growth, responsibility and advancement are encouraged and recognized. On the other hand, the environmental or hygiene factors such as strike actions, shortage of infrastructural facilities, unstable light, ventilation, poor working conditions, low salaries and poor supervisory relations, serve as dissatisfiers (Ozsoy, 2019). The difference between motivators and hygiene factors is that motivators cause employees to develop internal motivations whereas hygiene factors can make employees unhappy and dissatisfied, leading to demotivation. Herzberg was essentially concerned with people's well-being at work.

In relation to the present study, motivation is the key to enhancing employees' work experience which will result to increase in productivity. Provision of conducive working environment for lecturers serves as motivator to workers in the university because it makes teaching, researching and community service work fast and easy. This theory is relevant to the study because it equips the government with knowledge of what motivates school administrators, teachers and students. With this the government can create a conducive working environment that will enable the lecturers achieve their goals and the goals of the institutions (manpower production). This will attract competent foreign lecturers into the workforce of the universities once their hygiene needs are sure to be satisfied.

Concept of Foreign Academic

Foreign means dealing with or relating to other countries, while Academic means a person interested in or excelling at scholarly pursuits and activities (Oxford Lexico, 2022). Therefore, foreign academics are intellectual individuals who are excelling at scholarly pursuits and activities that are being employed in other countries other than their countries of origin. Foreign academics are professional persons who have bagged necessary degrees in specific fields and are been engaged to carry out scholastically activities, teaching, research and community services in other countries. Academic are now highly mobile (Thompson, 2014). In developed and developing countries throughout the world, foreign lecturers or academics are playing vital roles in the development of teaching programme, research programme and community service programmes. Sometimes, they identify and carry out developmental projects in their host universities.

There are a lot of benefits in engaging competent foreign academics in the Nigerian higher institutions. Among others, it helps to improve the standard of tertiary education and subsequently increase the ranking of Nigerian universities among other universities in the world. Having right proportion of competent foreign academics in the Nigerian universities will equally help to open up the universities to the international communities.

Factors Responsible for poor Patronage of Nigerian Public Higher Institutions by Competent Foreign Academics

There are many factors responsible for poor patronage of Nigerian public higher institutions by competent foreign lecturers. Some of the reasons include; quota system policies, inadequate funding, poor salaries, insecurity, inadequate infrastructural facilities, Lack of internationalization policy on Higher Education in Nigeria, poor working condition, unstable academic calendar and administration and management model.

Quota system policies

The quota system policies on recruitment in Nigeria is a major factor responsible for poor employment of competent foreign lecturers in the various higher institutions in Nigeria especially in the public universities. The federal character principle or quota system as enshrined in Nigeria's Constitution since 1979, seeks to ensure that recruitment and appointments to public service organizations reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic diversity of the country. The federal character principle, according to the committee is the distinctive desire of the Nigerian people to promote national integration, foster national unity as well as giving Nigerian citizens a sense of belonging irrespective of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion diversities (Obidimma & Okeke, 2021). Employment into federal universities are spread across all the geo-political zones to ensure equity and justice for Nigerians. Justine, Agbodike & Ogomegbulam (2015) observed that the federal character principle or quota system as enshrined in Nigeria's Constitution since 1979, seeks to ensure that recruitment and appointments to public service organizations reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic diversity of the country. The Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, Chapter two, Section 14(3&4) of the 1999 Constitution as amended states that: The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few State or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies (FRN, 1999). Goshwe (2022) concluded that all state and federal universities have resorted to employing mainly from their "catchment areas". Based on the law establishing Federal character commission, no provision or quota is given to foreign staff. All lecturers must be Nigerians only. Hence, if you see any foreign staff, he is an old stock waiting to be discarded. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), has attributed the inability of Nigerian universities to attract students and lecturers from around the world to poor working condition (Umeh, 2021).

Inadequate Funding

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), has attributed the inability of Nigerian universities to attract students and lecturers from around the world to poor funding of the universities in the Country (Umeh, 2021). Ogunode (2020a) submitted that inadequate funding is one of the major problems facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The budgetary allocation for the administration of public universities in Nigeria is not adequate to implement the programme of universities in Nigeria. The university system requires a lot of funds to be able to recruit adequate staff and competent foreign lecturers. The inability of the federal government to stick to the UNESCO minimum 26% of national budget for education is affecting the management of Nigerian universities (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). The poor funding of public universities in Nigeria is responsible for the poor quality of education and decay infrastructural facilities. Ogunode (2020a); Ogunode, Abubakar & Ajape (2021); Ifeanyi,

Ogunode & Ajape (2021) and Ogunode & Onyekachi, (2021) identified factors responsible for inadequate funding of public universities in Nigeria to include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning. The implications of underfunding of the public universities include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor quality of education, brain-drain, strike action and shortage of academic staff. Umeh (2021) listed inadequate financing, deteriorated infrastructure, lack of university autonomy as some of the factors responsible for the lack of internationalization of Nigerian universities. The higher the funding of the higher institutions, the more the development and this would attract competent foreign lecturers and students.

Poor Salary,

Poor salary is another fundamental factor preventing foreign lecturers from taking placement and employment in Nigerian public higher institutions especially the universities. The salaries of lecturers working in Nigerian universities are very poor. Ogunode (2020) submitted that Nigerian lecturers are poorly motivated financially and this is affecting their performance. Oludayo (2021) submitted that Assistant lecturer's monthly salary ranges from (N118,277 - N137,334); Lecturer II with a doctorate degree (N129,724 – N153,563); Lecturer I with at least three years post-PhD experience on the job (N160,809 – N203,778); Senior Lecturer with at least six years' experience on the job (N222,229 – 314,159); Associate Professor (with at least nine years' experience on the job: N277,179 – N350,169) and a full Professor with 12 and more years' experience on the job (N332,833 – 416,743). Oludayo opined that Nigerian lecturers get these after tax and other deductions. Before deductions, a newly appointed full Professor has N437,499 and after deductions he is paid N332,833 monthly. A Professor "at the bar", is one who has spent 10 years as a professor and that is when he/she can earn consolidated pay of N555,351 and following deductions their net pay comes down to N416,743 monthly!. In a comparison, Oludayo (2021) observed that in Ugandan public varsities, Assistant Lecturer earns \$1,631; Senior lecturer, \$2,432; Associate Professor, \$3,891 and Professor, \$4,054 per month, respectively. In University of South Africa, a Junior Lecturer earns N10,453,326 – N17,427,663; Lecturer, N12,547,744–N20,910,248; Senior Lecturer, N16,272,983 – N27,891,819; Associate Professor, N20,224,232 – N32,564,902) and Professor, N22,325,844 – N37,209,741 per annum. Umeh, (2021) noted that there are no foreign lecturers in Nigerian universities because the welfare and salaries are not competitive. "In the 70s, 80s and early 90s, the salary of a lecturer in Nigeria was comparable to anywhere in the world. But today it is not even up to one-tenth of what other lecturers are earning around the world and even in some African countries. All these are the problems why foreigners will not come to lecture in the domestic universities. The welfare packages for lecturers are not encouraging.

Insecurity

The insecurity problem facing Nigeria as a country may likely be another reason why many foreign lecturers left and new lecturers refuse to pink up employment in Nigerian public higher institutions. Ogunode (2020) opined that insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country. Sahara Reporters (2020) reported that on 29, November, 2020, Gunmen on Saturday evening killed an Associate Professor with the University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State capital. Also, Daily News on 18 February 2020 reported that an Associate *Professor* with the Institute of Public Policy & Administration (IPPA) of the University of Calabar had been kidnapped in Calabar. Vanguardngr on 17 February 2020 disclosed that Gunmen have *abducted* a university *lecturer* and a staff of a media organisation in Calabar, *Cross River* State. It was also reported by Premium Times (2020) that on 23 November 2020, gunmen, invaded Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria campus and abducted a lecturer's wife, and daughter. Ogunode (2020) observed that many students, lecturers and administrators have been killed while others kidnapped. The various attacks on the universities have resulted to school closure leading to unstable academic programme. In the (2018) UNESCO global education monitoring report (GEM), disclosed that 19,000 teachers have been displaced in the

Northern region, affecting access to education. The objective of tertiary education in Nigeria can only be realized when the tertiary institutions' environment is peaceful, secure and conducive for teaching, learning and implementation of research programme. The recent attacks on tertiary institutions, especially on the academic staff, non-academic staff and students cannot guarantee sustainable development of tertiary education in Nigeria (Ogunode, 2021). Hill (2013) observed that insecurity and poor working conditions are responsible for relocation of foreign lecturers working in Nigerian universities back to their countries.

Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Another factor discouraging foreign lecturers from seeking employment in the Nigerian higher institutions especially the public universities is the problem of lack of modern infrastructural facilities. Ogunode (2020) observed that infrastructural facilities refers to facilities aiding delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, roads facilities, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of the infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support effective administration of educational institutions and on the contrary, the inadequacies will prevent effective administration of educational institutions. Many public universities in Nigeria do not have adequate lecture halls, laboratories and offices for both students and academic staff. Ogunode & Abubakar (2020) and Ogunode, Jegede & Abubakar (2021) argued that many academic and non-academic staff do not have offices and para-venture they have one is been shared by five to six lecturers. The offices of the deans and heads of departments are not something to write home about. The students do not have adequate lecture halls and hostel accommodations. The factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities according to Ogunode & Jegede (2021) and Ogunode (2020) include; underfunding, increase in students' population, corruption, poor infrastructural facility planning, poor supervision and inflation. The implications of inadequate infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian public universities include; poor teaching and learning experience, low productivity, brain-drain, overcrowding of lecture halls, all leading to poor quality of education. Ojo (2020) stated that there is absence of functional internet, dilapidated lecture rooms, laboratories that parade equipment of the 1980s and comatose power supply, all of which hinder delivery of qualitative teaching and research in most public universities. Ogunode, Yiolokun, & Akeredolu, (2019) stated that many Nigerian universities lack modern laboratories to carry out research work. Every year thousands of young scholars from Nigeria travel out to carry out research work on their thesis or research work. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and computer laboratories in most Nigerian universities lack the necessary equipment to carry out simple research work. Umeh (2021) said, "You can only attract international students if the facilities in your universities are up-to-date and comparable to others around the world. He went further to argue that the international lecturers would prefer to go to other countries where you have good facilities, good laboratories and good work environment. In all of our universities, the facilities are not even comparable to what you have in secondary schools in some countries.

Lack of Internationalization Policy of Higher Education in Nigeria

The Nigerian higher education lacks policies that spelt out how foreign lecturers will be attracted to work in their various institutions. There is no specific policy to encourage international students and lecturers to come and study / work in the country. Many countries like South Africa, Malaysia, UK, USA, India etc have policies to attract international students and lecturers. The lack of this internationalization policy is another reason for low employment of foreign lecturers in the Nigerian higher institutions especially the universities.

Poor Working Conditions

The working conditions and policies attached to employment in the higher institutions is not attractive and this is responsible for the low placement of international academics in the various universities in Nigeria. Ogunode, Jegede & Abubakar (2021) opined that Nigerian academic staff is among the poorly motivated in the world. Musa (2018) lamented that the working condition

and policies on access to grant, training, students-lecturers, promotion, leaves and allowances for the Nigerian academic staff is poor and not always been implemented as stated on the employment letter. Umeh, (2021) submitted that “In the 80s due to good working condition, the Nigerian universities attracted lecturers from different countries in this world; Europe, Africa and Asia. But today, they would not come because the welfare and salary are not competitive. “In the 70s, 80s and early 90s, the salary of a lecturer was comparable to anywhere in the world. But today it is not even up to one-tenth of what other lecturers are earning around the world and even in some African countries. Ogunode, Jegede, Adah & Audu (2020) cited Charles, Ijeoma & John who carried out a study and discovered that a greater percentage of lecturers, 246 (76.35%), had not benefited from research grants for many years. Inadequate funding of research and stringent conditions attached to research grants were identified as two major constraints to accessing research funds by lecturers. Also another study on implementation of welfare packages by Ukaegbu, (2017) discovered that, whereas there are good welfare policy statements in the study area, the level of implementation of these policies were poor. Furthermore, over 90% of the respondents insisted that full implementation of welfare policies would have positive impact on workers’ performance to a very large extent. The results further indicated that there have been very few in-house and outside training programmes in the study area. A total of 87% of respondents agreed that poor level of implementation of welfare policies on training and development is a source of discouragement which have negatively affected academic performance of both teaching and non-teaching staff and have led to poor service delivery in our Universities. All these are the problems why foreign lecturers would not seek placement in the various universities across the country. The welfare packages are not encouraging.

Unstable Academic Calendar,

Unstable academic calendar that has characterized the Nigerian higher institutions especially the universities is another factor that is preventing many foreign lecturers from picking placement in the various Nigerian universities and some who are already in the system are leaving. Ogunode (2020) observed that strike actions in the Nigerian public universities is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The Nigerian public universities are known for continuous strike actions by different union groups in the public universities. The continuous strike actions by these different union groups are frustrating the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The reasons for the strike actions by different union groups include; underfunding of the public universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor implementation of agreement reached with union groups and poor working conditions. On the other hand, the implications of the continuous strike actions on the public universities include; disruption in the academic programme, poor quality of education, bad image for the universities, poor ranking internationally and poor patronage of public universities in Nigeria. Continuous strike actions is frustrating and de-motivating. Many foreign lecturers have left the Nigerian universities because of these problems and many are discouraged of coming in too because of the various strike actions. Strike actions have reduced the quality of higher education and is giving the universities bad image in the international community.

Administration and management Model

The administration and management style adopted for managing the higher institutions in Nigeria did not promote accountability, fairness, justice and merit. Lecturers are appointed or promoted mostly based on political influence and based on relationship and not on merit. Recently, some host communities of higher institutions are calling for indigenization of the principal officer of higher institutions meaning only indigenes of the host communities should be appointed as the principal officers of the universities. This actions and practices does not encourage foreign lecturers to come and work here where his/her career ladder is limited. There are some positions in the universities he/she cannot dream of occupying due to racial and cultural differences.

Way Forward

Based on the problem identified, the following were suggested:

- 1. Review Federal Character Law:** The national assembly should review law establishing Federal Character Commission and exempting the higher institutions especially the universities from the law. This will allow the higher institutions (universities) to employ the best international and foreign lecturers and researchers with global reputation.
- 2. Adequate Funding:** Higher institutions in Nigeria should be adequately funded by the federal and state governments. This would help to provide a sustainable development in the system.
- 3. Increment in Salaries:** The salaries and allowances of academic staff should be increased comparable to what is obtainable in other parts of the world. This will help to attract international and competent foreign lecturers.
- 4. Adequate Security:** The government should provide security in all the higher institutions. This will help to guarantee safety of lives and properties around the institutions.
- 5) Provision of Adequate Infrastructure Facilities:** In order to attract international and competent foreign academics, the government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities in all higher institutions especially the universities.
- 6) Draft internationalization policy on higher education:** The federal government should come up with policies and action plans on internationalization of higher institutions. This will help to open the various higher institutions to the world and attract the international and competent foreign lecturers.
- 7) Improve the Working Conditions of Public University Staff:** The government should increase the grant allowance, provide teaching and research facilities and implement all the conditions attached to employment letter such as training opportunities.
- 8). Implement all agreements reached with the union groups:** The government should implement all agreements reached with different union groups in the various higher institutions to avoid strike actions and ensure a stable academic calendar.

Conclusion

Higher institutions are supposed to be a global community made up of different people from different parts of the world coming together to carry out teaching and learning programmes. The lecturers and students are supposed to come from different parts of the world for the purpose of lecturing and learning. In Nigeria, majority of the higher institutions only have few proportions of international foreign academics working in selected few universities. Factors responsible for this problem include quota system policies, inadequate funding, poor salary, insecurity, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of internationalization policy on higher education in Nigeria, poor working condition, unstable academic calendar and poor administration and management model. The paper recommends that the federal and state governments should remove the higher institutions from the federal character employment policy, increase the funding of higher education, increase the salaries of academic staff, provide adequate security and adequate modern infrastructural facilities. Also, the government should come up with internationalization policy on higher education, improve on the working conditions of academic staff and implement all the agreements reached with different union groups in the various higher institutions to avoid strike actions.

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